

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EA/K:EHURWITZ:FLW
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S/S:SGOLDSMITH
S - W. TWADDELL (PHONE)
P - DO'DONAHUE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, US

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH ROK FONMIN

1. THIS TELEGRAM IS BASED ON AN UNCLEARED MEMCON AND IS SUBJECT TO REVISION.
2. SECRETARY HAD WORKING LUNCHEON FOR FONMIN PARK TONG JIN ON MARCH 9. KOREAN GUESTS INCLUDED KOREAN AMBASSADOR HAHM, EMBASSY MINISTER KOO CHOONG WHAY, FONMIN AMERICAN BUREAU DIRECTOR PARK SANG-YONG AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION BUREAU DIRECTOR CHONG WOO YONG. US SIDE INCLUDED UNDERSECRETARY HABIB, AMBASSADOR SNEIDER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY-DESIGNATE HOLBROOK AND EA/K DIRECTOR HURWITZ. MAJOR POINTS DISCUSSED AT LUNCH FOLLOW:

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3. U.S. SECURITY COMMITMENT AND TROOP WITHDRAWALS: THE SECRETARY SAID HE WANTED TO ASSURE THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT OUR COMMITMENT TO KOREAN SECURITY REMAINED FIRM. THUS FAR, THERE HAD BEEN NO DECISION ON TIMING AND MODALITIES OF GROUND TROOP WITHDRAWAL PROCESS, BUT AS THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY HAD SAID MANY TIMES PUBLICLY, OUR MOVES WOULD BE CAUTIOUS AND WE WOULD DO NOTHING PRECIPITOUS. THERE WOULD BE FULL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT. THE SECRETARY THOUGHT THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO BEGIN SUCH

CONSULTATIONS IN THE MAY-JUNE PERIOD, IF THAT WAS CONVENIENT WITH THE KOREAN SIDE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT PRESIDENT PARK HAD EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE FOR EARLY CONSULTATIONS, IN PART TO HEAD OFF PRESS SPECULATION WHICH COULD RAISE DOUBTS ABOUT THE U.S. COMMITMENT BOTH AMONG THE SOUTH KOREAN PEOPLE AND IN NORTH KOREA. THE FOREIGN MINISTER THOUGHT THAT UNTIL WE REACH AGREEMENT ON HOW THE TROOP WITHDRAWALS WERE TO BE CARRIED OUT, BOTH GOVERNMENTS SHOULD TRY TO AVOID COMMENTING ON THE ISSUE. THE SECRETARY AGREED THAT WE SHOULD AVOID EXTENSIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS, BUT WE MUST RESPOND TO PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES ON THIS ISSUE.

4. MR. HABIB NOTED THAT THE JAPANESE WOULD BE LIKELY TO RAISE THE KOREAN SECURITY ISSUE WITH US DURING THE FUKUDA VISIT. WE WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, TALK TO THEM IN TERMS BEYOND WHAT WE HAVE SAID PUBLICLY, AND, IN ANY EVENT, WE WILL KEEP THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT FULLY INFORMED ON OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE JAPANESE ON THIS ISSUE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE APPRECIATED THIS, NOTING THAT THE KOREANS, AS THE PARTY DIRECTLY CONCERNED, SHOULD BE THE FIRST ONES TO BE CONSULTED ON THE TROOP ISSUE.

5. THE FOREIGN MINISTER NOTED THAT THERE WERE NO CHANGES IN THE OFFING IN NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS, AND TENSIONS CONTINUED TO EXIST. U.S. TROOP REMOVALS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED
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IN LIGHT OF THESE TENSIONS AND NOTHING SHOULD BE DONE WHICH WOULD GIVE IMPRESSION THAT THE U.S. WAS DISENGAGING FROM THE PENINSULA WITHOUT TENSION-REDUCING MOVES ON PART OF NORTH KOREA.

6. U.S.-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS: THE SECRETARY OBSERVED THAT THERE HAD BEEN PRESS SPECULATION ON POSSIBLE U.S. CONTACTS WITH NORTH KOREA. OUR POSITION ON THIS MATTER REMAINS FIRMS; WE WILL HAVE NO DISCUSSIONS WITH THE NORTH KOREANS RELATING TO THE KOREAN PENINSULA WITHOUT THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. THE PRESIDENT, AS WELL AS THE SECRETARY, HAS CLEARLY REITERATED THIS POSITION. THE FOREIGN MINISTER INQUIRED AS TO THE "ESSENCE" OF THE LETTER EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE NORTH KOREANS AND PRESIDENT CARTER PRIOR TO THE INAUGURATION. THE SECRETARY REPLIED THAT PYONGYANG WANTED TO BEGIN CONTACTS WITH US BUT THAT WE HAD DECLINED. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT THE KOREAN PRESS HAD VIEWED THESE EXCHANGES AS THE FIRST U.S. GOVERNMENT WRITTEN REPLY TO A NORTH KOREAN

OVERTURE. MR. HABIB SAID THIS WAS NOT CORRECT; US HAD NOT WRITTEN TO NORTH KOREANS; USG COMMUNICATION WAS AN AIDE MEMOIRE TO PAKISTANI FOREIGN MINISTRY IN RESPONSE TO ONE FROM THEM.

7. NORTH-SOUTH TALKS: THE SECRETARY INQUIRED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE NORTH-SOUTH TALKS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED THAT THERE WERE SPORADIC, NON-SUBSTANTIVE LOW-LEVEL RED CROSS TALKS, AT WHICH THE NORTH ENGAGED IN THE USUAL POLEMICS. THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE REMAINED STALLED. AMBASSADOR SNEIDER NOTED THAT THE NORTH HAD DEACTIVATED ITS END OF THE TELEPHONE HOT LINE BETWEEN SEOUL AND PYONGYANG AFTER THE AUGUST L8 PANMUNJOM INCIDENT. MR. HABIB ASKED WHETHER, APART FROM ITS PUBLIC PROPOSALS ON FOOD AID AND A NON-AGGRESSION PACT, THE SOUTH HAD TRIED TO EXPLORE QUIETLY THE POSSIBILITY OF RESUMING THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED THAT THERE WAS NO SECRET

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SUITABLE CHANNEL FOR DOING SO. HE ASKED WHETHER THE U.S. DETECTED ANY CHANGE IN THE ATTITUDE OF NORTH KOREA, THE PRC, OR THE USSR TO THE KOREA QUESTION. THE SECRETARY SAID WE HAD SEEN NOTHING TO THIS EFFECT.

8. THE KOREA QUESTION AT THE UN: THE SECRETARY ASKED ABOUT SEOUL'S VIEW OF THE KOREA QUESTION IN THE UN; SPECIFICALLY, DID THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT THINK IT WOULD BE RAISED IN THE NEXT UNGA. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT SEOUL HAD NO HARD INFORMATION ON NORTH KOREAN INTENTIONS. AS A RULE, PYONGYANG DID NOT MAKE ITS POSITION KNOWN ON THIS ISSUE UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE. IN VIEW OF NORTH KOREA'S SETBACKS AT THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED MEETING AND AT LAST YEAR'S UNGA, THEY WOULD PROBABLY LOBBY ACTIVELY TO REGAIN LOST GROUND. SEOUL WOULD THEREFORE MAKE A STRONG EFFORT TO COUNTER NORTH KOREAN MOVES AND TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IF PYONGYANG SUBMITS A RESOLUTION THIS YEAR, IT WILL HAVE NO CHANCE OF SUCCESS.

9. THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT THE CORE GROUP IN NEW YORK HAD WORKED WELL LAST YEAR. WE HAD NO INFORMATION THUS FAR ON NORTH KOREAN INTENTIONS BUT WE LOOKED FORWARD TO CONSULTING WITH THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT AND THE CORE GROUP ON HOW BEST TO PROCEED. MR. HABIB SUGGESTED THAT THE KOREANS TAKE THE LEAD IN SOUNDING OUT OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND THAT WITHIN A MONTH OR SO WE COULD EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON NEXT STEPS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED WHETHER THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD PROPOSE ANY NEW INITIATIVES ON KOREA AT THE UNGA; FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD WE REPLACE OR SUPPLEMENT THE FOUR-POWER TALKS PROPOSAL? THE SECRETARY REPLIED THAT OUR CURRENT PROPOSALS WERE USEFUL AND STILL VALID, AND WE WERE NOT NOW CONTEMPLATING NEW ONES. WE WOULD, HOWEVER, WELCOME ANY PROPOSALS SEOUL MIGHT WANT TO MAKE ALONG THESE LINES.

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10. FISHERIES: AMBASSADOR HAHM NOTED THAT THE SOVIET 200-MILE FISHING ZONE DECLARATION HAD SHUT THE KOREANS OUT OF THEIR TRADITIONAL POLLACK FISHING WATERS OFF KAMCHATKA. SEOUL HAD NO WAY OF GETTING IN TOUCH WITH MOSCOW ON THIS ISSUE AND HAD SOUGHT U.S. ASSISTANCE; THE AMBASSADOR ASKED WHETHER THE SECRETARY MIGHT NOT RAISE THE ISSUE WHEN HE WAS IN MOSCOW. THE SECRETARY SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO THIS. AMBASSADOR HAHM SAID THAT THE U.S. QUOTA ASSIGNED TO KOREAN FISHERMEN WAS QUITE GENEROUS IN VIEW OF KOREA'S BRIEF HISTORY OF FISHING WITHIN THE U.S. FISHING ZONE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER INTERJECTED THAT KOREA COULD STILL USE A HIGHER QUOTA. MR. HABIB ASKED WHETHER THE KOREANS WERE STILL FISHING OFF KAMCHATKA. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT ALL KOREAN VESSELS HAD BEEN PULLED OUT OF THE SOVIET'S 200-MILE ZONE; SEOUL DID NOT WANT TO TAKE ANY RISKS OF TESTING THE SOVIET REACTION TO CONTINUED FISHING.

11. THE SECRETARY DISCUSSED THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AT A BRIEF PRIVATE MEETING PRIOR TO THE LUNCHEON.
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